



This Week in Ellis Island History

March 16, 1953

U.S. Supreme Court rules in the case of *SHAUGHNESSY v. MEZEI*. Ignatz Mezei, an alien resident of the United States traveled abroad and remained in Hungary for 19 months. On his return to this country, the Attorney General ordered him permanently excluded without a hearing. The order was based on “information of a confidential nature, the disclosure of which would be prejudicial to the public interest.” Because other nations refused to accept him, his exclusion at Ellis Island was continued for 21 months. The Supreme Court ruled that the Attorney General’s continued exclusion of the alien without a hearing does not amount to an unlawful detention.



The Great Hall was used mainly for detaining and deporting immigrants from 1924 to 1954

March 16, 1970

Eight Native-Americans depart via boat from the New Jersey shore heading for Ellis Island, intending to set up camp on the island. A faulty gas line, however, aborted the plan and left the intruders adrift until the Coast Guard rescued them. When they vowed to attempt another landing, the Coast Guard stationed two patrol boats near Ellis Island, proclaimed a "zone of security" around it, and pointed out that under the provisions of the Espionage Act of 1917, unauthorized squatters could receive jail terms of up to ten years.



Ellis Island was abandoned and deteriorating by the 1970s

March 18, 1904

The newly completed ferry *Ellis Island* launches from Wilmington, Delaware en route to New York. The 160 foot boat would carry over two million passengers on her numerous trips from Ellis Island to lower Manhattan, including many immigrants just approved to enter the United States.



The *Ellis Island*, docked at her namesake island